

Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

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Love, Faith and Acceptance

This column is always the hardest to start. I save it for last each month, dreading and relishing the opportunity to share my own voice. Often, the topic for it doesn't come to me until I am forced, past deadline, to sit still and write.

And so here I am again, preparing to close out another year of the publication before you all go on summer break and the *Literacy Link* goes on hiatus in June and July. I could reflect on my two contract years as editor, or wax philosophical on endings and beginnings. I could write something inspirational, witty or thought-provoking.

Instead, I'm going to write about what's on my heart right now, in my living room, at 8:39 p.m. on a Tuesday when I should be finishing some end-of-semester reading for my Ph.D. coursework.

Love, faith and acceptance are on my heart and mind tonight.

Over the weekend I had the privilege of attending the National Conference on Family Literacy at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. I was doubly interested in this conference as my research interest is family literacy and *Common Core* lead author Sue Pimentel was speaking. However, of all the things I heard at the conference, the words of Oscar Barbarin of Tulane University continue to echo in my head. During his presentation on promoting literacy in African-American families, Barbarin was asked about parents who seem not to care.

We all have dealt with "those parents" – the ones we can't get

on the phone and don't come in for conferences. They don't seem to read our correspondence or take an active interest in school activities. We lament their lack of interest and bemoan the plight of their neglected children.

Barbarin, however, was adamant that even these parents care about their children. With the exception of a very sick 3-4 percent, Barbarin believes *all* parents truly care. He gave an extreme example of a mother who beat her young daughter for flirting with an adult man. While her actions were wrong, the fact that she took action in the situation showed she was concerned for and cared about her daughter. Even when they don't show it or behave appropriately, parents care about their kids.

His faith in humanity was astounding, and I had to wonder why we can't all be that way. Why can't we think the best of one another and act accordingly? Why can't we accept and act as if, whether they show us or not, parents love and want the best for their children? And why can't the general public believe that teachers are hard working and want what's best for our kids? Why can't we have this faith in one another?

And while we are busy thinking the best of one another, why can't we just accept that there's room for growth in all of us? Why can't we just decide to love ourselves and one another just as we are, understanding that everyone is doing the best that we know how?

I confess that my passion in this matter comes from a personal

place. You see, I was the kid with the single mom who didn't care. Abuse, neglect, alcohol, drugs – that was my home life. I was the definition of at-risk.

Yet I'm here where "they" said kids like me should never be. I have a wonderful career, two (almost three!) college degrees, and a loving fiancé (52 days!).

For a long time, I thought my accomplishments were in spite of my mother. I resented her for my upbringing and I regarded her with anger at worst and patronizing amusement at best.

I am not proud of this.

My accomplishments are because of my mother.

She has always done the best she could, the best she knew how. My mother loves me, has always loved me, no matter how she did or didn't show it. And she has **ALWAYS** made it clear that she wanted more for me. She never wanted me to end up like her.

I hope I *am* like her. I see her growing and changing into a better and better person. She may have grown more slowly than many of us, but I hope that, like my mother, I remember it's never too late to grow and change.

Love and accept one another. Have faith that we're all doing our best. Have a wonderful summer.

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Spotlight on Professional Learning: Samantha's Story

Samantha Miller has taught nine years in Bullitt County Schools. She has taught K-5. Miller is a graduate of both the University of Louisville (BA, MEd) and Bellarmine University (MAT). She is an active participant in the OVEC Literacy Network. She enjoys organizing things, spending time with her family, and curriculum.

The system of leadership networks in Kentucky has been designed to support the quality implementation of the requirements set forth in Senate Bill 1 (2009). Specifically, the networks are intended to build the capacity of each district in the state as they implement Kentucky's new Core Academic Standards, develop assessment literacy among all educators and work toward ensuring that every student is college and career ready.

To that end, the vision for the networks is: Every school district in the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a knowledgeable and cohesive leadership team that guides the professional learning and practice of all administrators, teachers and staff so that every student experiences highly effective teaching, learning and assessment practices in every classroom, every day.

Participants in each of the leadership networks have a responsibility to collaborate with other leaders throughout the region to hone practical knowledge and work collaboratively within the district to scale up highly effective practices in every classroom. Four major components form the foundation of every leadership network in the state: Kentucky's Core Academic Standards (KCAS); assessment literacy (using the Classroom Assessment for Student Learning [CASL] text); characteristics of highly effective teaching and learning (CHETL) including: classroom climate, classroom assessment and reflection, instructional rigor and student engagement, instructional relevance, and knowledge of content; and leadership. For more information, click [here](#).

We've all wondered whose behind state mandates, curriculum changes and so

forth. Thanks to my district's move toward thinking strategies, my mental image of KDE is a bit like the scene from *The Wizard of Oz* when the curtain is pulled back to reveal the ultimate puppet master.



Sometimes I imagine if I were to pull the curtain at KDE, I'd see an octopus sending out e-mails. Yes, it's a bit out there, but then again, so are many of the things that trickle down to the teacher level.

I remember the exact moment when I began to question everything I had come to learn, believe and understand about education. My dear friend and instructional coach Lana Dixon and I had a pivotal conversation that led me onto this path. She encouraged me to explore the concerns I had about the research-based literacy program and curriculum if I felt unsettled about it.

I ended up charting and cross referencing the state standards with my school's researched-based reading program. The discrepancies were unnerving. Born from this discovery was a scope and sequence for the five components of literacy, which included detailed week-by-week word studies, vocabulary and comprehension. It became obvious how critical each learning day was, with no time to waste. It became clear to me that no matter how great the intention and follow through to teach the program and meet the content, there were blazing deficiencies. Huge gaps awaited on the learning path for my students.

Over that next year I had an intense relationship with MAP Descartes. Descartes is a resource designed to make it easier to use MAP scores to improve classroom instruction for all students. My district uses it to design and inform differentiated instruction. The Descartes breakdown of scaffolded skills gave me an insight as to the level of rigor my students needed (we began using MAP before the national standards had trickled down to us). I began to cross reference MAP Descartes with my existing scope and sequence. You are probably wondering what drove me to continue this madness – it was the unsettling feeling that something wasn't right, kind of like an education sixth sense.

From this extensive process, I developed an understanding of the depth of each skill my students were ready to master. While several people felt that I was teaching to the MAP test, I quickly disputed that. I wasn't teaching to the test, I was simply making sure my students were prepared to be successful. After all, it's not an honest measure of their progress if they haven't been taught

a rigorous curriculum.

The following year Dixon recommended me for the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) literacy network. Through this three-year commitment, I've had the intense challenge to develop as a professional. I've had first-hand, in-depth training with deconstructing common core standards, understanding assessment literacy, learning thinking strategies through book studies, writing literacy modules with guidance from OVEC peers, and understanding how deeply embedded the characteristics of highly effective teachers are in all of these areas. The time I have spent working with this network has been the fundamental core of my journey as a teacher and leader. I have learned how to present material in a thought-provoking way for my students, guide their learning to attainably high levels and nurture their literacy development in a deeper, more meaningful way.

The level of mentorship I've had from Denise Amos (KDE), Pam Scudder (OVEC), Jean Wolf (Louisville Writing Project) and many others has continually given me what I need to develop as a professional. My professional growth would not have been possible without support from my district leaders, Keith Davis, Greg Shultz, Terry Price, and principal, Terri Lewis. They are collectively responsible for allowing my intense professional journey.

As professionals, we need to be responsible for our own growth. Surround yourself with the best from your profession; be meticulously thorough in preplanning and thinking, as it will save time for you and your students; and be open to change. Lewis always says, "What's best for students isn't always what's easiest for us." So true. But what's best for us is knowing that the children we've been entrusted with have had the quality education they deserve and need for life.

I've experienced a truly unique journey of learning. I've learned that the best place to begin your professional learning is with self-dialogue. The changes with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and assessment are taking us in the right direction. I'm starting to see how it all fits together, and I have hope. And you can bet that until I see it for myself, a little piece of me will always imagine an octopus behind the curtain.



Lexile Measures Help Kentucky Fight Summer Reading Slide

Kathy Mansfield is a library media specialist at Heritage Elementary (Shelby County) and former library media and textbook consultant for KDE. She wrote this case study for MetaMetrics, which has graciously allowed us to reprint it here.

For most students, the summer months are a time of freedom and fun after a rigorous school year. However, after progressing in their studies during the academic calendar, much of that progress can be undone from lack of instruction and practice during the summer. Studies show that students experience “summer slide” or “summer loss” when they do not engage in educational activities over summer break. Research has further shown that this loss over multiple summers explains the achievement gap in reading abilities between low-income children and their more affluent peers.

In response to the summer reading slide epidemic, the Council of Chief State School Officers, in partnership with MetaMetrics, coordinated a national state-led summer reading initiative to bolster student reading achievement during summer break. This past May, Kentucky joined the “Chief’s Summer Reading Challenge” by developing the “Find a Book, Kentucky” program to raise awareness of the summer-loss epidemic, share compelling research on the importance of personalized reading activities and provide access to a variety of free resources to support targeted reading and the initiative as a whole.

“Find a Book, Kentucky”

As the library media and textbooks consultant at KDE, I coordinated the rollout of “Find a Book, Kentucky,” a joint Department of Education effort alongside the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives and MetaMetrics – an educational measurement and research organization. “Find a Book” is a tool that uses Lexile measures to help students build personal book lists that match their reading ability and interests. “Find a Book, Kentucky” is a version specifically tailored for students in our state. A unique logo and Web address helped to personalize the tool to encourage Kentucky schools and families to participate in a “Summer Reading Pledge” campaign, “KYReads.”

School and Public Libraries Work Together:
The Kentucky Department for Libraries and

Archives oversees the free public libraries in our state. That department’s commissioner, Wayne Onkst, and the commissioner for KDE, Terry Holliday, recognized that working together for the common goal of tackling summer reading loss could result in more students reading during the summer and steady reading growth for students year-round. With MetaMetric’s “Chief’s Summer Reading Challenge” as an added incentive, both agencies worked together to promote “Find a Book, Kentucky” alongside yearly summer reading programs already in place in public libraries and school libraries throughout the state.

Each agency created a Web page with information about summer reading-loss research, summer reading programs in public libraries around the state, links to information about Lexile reading measures and a link to “Find a Book, Kentucky.” As KDE’s consultant to school librarians, I attended summer reading program trainings for public librarians around the state to discuss ways they could collaborate with school librarians to promote summer reading. I demonstrated the “Find a Book, Kentucky” tool and provided informational fliers to distribute to library patrons.

I knew school librarians would be instrumental in spreading the word about “Find a Book, Kentucky” and the importance of summer reading. In Kentucky, every elementary and secondary school has a certified school media librarian, so they became our main contacts and promoters of “Find a Book, Kentucky” and local summer reading programs. School media librarians already knew about Lexile measures since Kentucky was an early advocate for using Lexile measures to match readers with books.

I presented sessions at both the summer and fall school library conferences, as well as sessions at the annual public librarians’ Conference, about The Lexile Framework for Reading. School librarians working alongside local public librarians helped spread the word about summer reading importance and the use of “Find a Book, Kentucky” more quickly and to a larger audience.

Statewide Effort Brings Statewide Success

School librarians and public librarians on the same page about summer reading and “Find a Book, Kentucky” meant that parents,

teachers and students heard the same message all across the state. A media blitz in the spring helped to ensure the success of that message. Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear recorded a public service announcement encouraging students to read during the summer, to participate in local summer reading programs and to use “Find a Book, Kentucky” to create book lists to match their reading abilities. Press releases, a letter about summer reading and “Find a Book, Kentucky” from the first lady and messages from Holliday to school districts provided a consistent message to students and families.

KDE’s Facebook page and *Kentucky Teacher* online publication featured information about “Find a Book, Kentucky” and summer reading. Kentucky Educational Television’s (KET) Bill Goodman featured Onkst and MetaMetrics President Malbert Smith on an episode of *One to One with Bill Goodman* to talk about summer reading loss and how Kentucky’s schools and public libraries were collaborating to tackle the issue. Kentucky was pledging to read, and everyone was invited to jump right in.

KYReads

Holliday challenged students across the state to submit a “Summer Reading Pledge” to build excitement about reading during the summer months. KYReads was introduced as a new slogan for year-round reading, and I used existing KDE communication tools, including [Kentucky School Library Media News](#) (a quarterly online newsletter for school librarians), [Literacy Link](#), and the Kentucky school librarian listserv and department e-mail contact list for school librarians, to spread the message to school media librarians across the state.

I also sent “Find a Book, Kentucky” bookmarks and audience-specific fliers to school librarians to share with students and parents, and pre-written blurbs to use on school and district websites to promote the summer reading challenge.

As a result of the intensive, purposeful and audience-specific messages from KDE, the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives and the First Lady’s Office, Kentucky was the state with the highest number of summer reading pledges for 2012. More than 1,000 individuals from Kentucky

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Lexile Measures Help Kentucky

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pledged to read during the summer, reading almost 12,000 books.

Reflections

KYReads was an overwhelming success due to the strong collaboration between KDE, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Kentucky's Office of the First Lady, and MetaMetrics. Data about summer reading pledge participants (provided by MetaMetrics) indicated the largest number of student pledgers came from districts with strong school library media programs and full-time, certified school librarians. These

same districts also have strong representation in the Kentucky Association for School Librarians (KASL), Kentucky's professional organization for school librarians. KASL (formerly KY School Media Association) was instrumental in promoting the initiative through its regional affiliates and through its statewide communication tools. By focusing our message through school media librarians, Kentucky ensured every school received information about "Find a Book, Kentucky" and KYReads, and ensured a local building contact for further information.

For more information, visit the links below:

- [Find a Book, Kentucky](#)
- [Summer Reading Kentucky](#)
- [Kentucky School Library Media News](#)
- KET's [One to One with Bill Goodman](#)
- [Kentucky First to Adopt Common Core State Standards Initiative](#)

For more information on Lexile measures and The Challenge, visit www.Lexile.com/Chiefs-Challenge.

Six Terrific Pairings of Print and Non-print Texts to Increase Engagement

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Having always had an interest in photography, film, and non-fiction, I never had much trouble incorporating reading non-print texts into the classes I taught. When reading fiction, I generally paired it with non-fiction or non-print text based on a general topic or theme. Text pairing is not only an effective way to engage students, it also provides opportunity to teach students many of the important skills they need to be successful in life.

Here are some of my favorite pairings from my days in the high school classroom and some my young sons and I have enjoyed as we explore texts together:

Pairing No. 1: *Slowly Slowly Slowly Said the Sloth* by Eric Carle paired with YouTube clips of sloths moving slowly. It was one thing to see the pictures in the book, but my curious boys were always interested in seeing video. [Here's](#) one we watched

together after reading the book. This was one of the videos we accessed online; there are many more YouTube clips on sloths now, but this one happened to capture our interest several years ago.

Pairing No. 2: *Library Mouse* by Daniel Kirk paired with images of various libraries and new short award-winning films. The boys and I have read and reread *Library Mouse* together innumerable times over the past five years. Usually we use it to launch my youngest son into his favorite journal writing activities because he enjoys writing non-fiction. Even now that they are both beyond picture books for their own reading, we still enjoy some of our favorite picture books again and again. In fact, we like *Library Mouse* so well, I've taken to using it in writing workshops with teachers as we explore critical literacies and paired texts. Most recently, I've paired the following print and non-print texts for workshops with teachers. [The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore](#) short film and [Most Interesting Libraries of the World](#).

Pairing No. 3: *Henry Climbs a Mountain* by D. B. Johnson paired with images of Walden

Pond and replicas of Thoreau's cabin found online. There are actually several books by D.B. Johnson depicting various stages of Thoreau's life, and we like them all, but our most interesting conversations between mom and sons tend to come from this particular text. Some of these similar conversations were shared with my high school students as we read *Walden*.

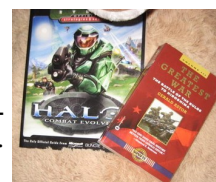
Pairing No. 4: *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau and [Mexican War lithograph](#). This pairing worked nicely because it brought conversations about another aspect of Thoreau's life, and it also brought history into the classroom. Many of the students I taught in this particular English class also were students who were viewing this same lithograph in their U.S. history class, so students made connections and saw school as more than isolated courses in a school day.

Pairing No. 5: [Ballad of Birmingham](#) by Dudley Randall paired with [newspaper clipping](#) and various [images](#) from the bombing. Conversations around these texts center not only around the historical event but also around the rights of people in today's society. Are we all treat-

ing others appropriately? Are we discriminating against others for any reason or using violence in an attempt to solve our problems, or are we following the lead of Thoreau who practiced civil disobedience?

Pairing No. 6: *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams paired with artwork, specifically *Greyed Rainbow* by Jackson Pollock, as well as an article about the life of Pollock from *Scholastic Art* magazine. Let's not forget that music also is a great way to pair text. In this particular unit with a unifying focus of freedom from convention, our class also enjoyed the unconventional music from *Colors* by [Ken Nordine](#).

The skill of pairing texts rests in selecting texts to meet the needs of learners in an individual classroom, so let the text pairings referenced here serve as inspiration for selecting texts that will suit the needs of your students' demographics and learning needs. Pairing texts can lead to greater student engagement, and it also can be an excellent way to teach specific standards.



Letters About Literature Contest Winners

Letters About Literature (LAL) is an annual writing contest for young readers sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Letters About Literature (LAL) writing contest for young readers challenges students to write a personal letter to an author of a fiction or nonfiction book that inspired them. The contest is open to students in grades 4-10.

Kentucky has selected its 2013 first-, second- and third-place winners at each level who will receive cash awards (1st place – \$150; 2nd place – \$75; 3rd place – \$50). First-place winners at

each level advance to the national level judging and a chance to win a \$1m000 cash award (or \$150 for second place.)

Thank you to everyone who submitted letters. Congratulations to all of our winners!

Level 1 (Grades 4-6)

1st Place: Summer Mohamed
East Hardin MS
Teacher – Kelly Baucum

2nd Place: Mallory Hudson
Plano Elementary School
Teacher – Kaleigh Vincent

3rd Place: Hannah Hassoun

Villa Madonna Academy
Teacher – Jennifer Yuenger

Level 2 (Grades 7-8)

1st Place: Leila Abou-Jaoude
School for the Creative and Performing Arts
Teacher – Eva Aldridge

2nd Place: Katrin Flores
School for the Creative and Performing Arts
Teacher – Eva Aldridge

3rd Place: Addison Osborne
Knox County MS
Teacher – Sandra Ramsey

Level 3 (Grades 9-10)

1st Place: Meg Hancock
Paducah Tilghman High School
Teacher – Todd Ross

2nd Place: Amina Shale
Seneca High School
Teacher – Jill Proffitt

3rd Place: Abbigayle Willgruber
Greenwood High School

National winners will be posted [here](#) soon. Although there were no national winners from Kentucky, we are very proud of all of our contestants.

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE
Letter Writing Contest 2013

Collaboration and the PGES

The National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE), a coalition of education associations, policy organizations and foundations united to support schools in elevating literacy learning, conducted a nationally representative survey of educators of all roles, grade levels and subject areas to find out where we stand as a nation. In its recent report, [Remodeling Literacy Learning: Making Room for What Works](#), NCLE found the following key conclusions:

1. Literacy is not just the English teacher's job anymore.
2. Working together is working smarter.
3. Schools aren't structured to facilitate educators working together.
4. Many of the building blocks for remodeling literacy learning are in place.
5. Effective collaboration needs systemic support.

In response to these findings, Linda Darling-Hammond wrote an article for *The Washington Post* entitled [What Teachers Need and Reformers Ignore: Time to Collaborate](#). Darling-Hammond asserts the following: "In fields like trauma care and the building trades that have seen sharp gains

in quality over the past generation, the emergence of new standards for professional practice coincided with a focus on improving collaborative decision-making and inquiry to solve problems in real time. If we want to see similar gains in education, we must structure for success by understanding that effective collaboration in schools doesn't occur by happenstance – it requires purposeful action."

Unfortunately, this kind of purposeful action isn't prevalent in our schools. According to NCLE:

- Only 32 percent have a chance to frequently co-create or reflect with colleagues about how a lesson has worked.
- Only 21 percent are given time to frequently examine student work with colleagues.
- Only 14 percent frequently receive feedback from colleagues.
- Only 10 percent frequently have the opportunity to observe the teaching practice of a colleague.

Here in Kentucky, we are striving to remedy this situation. Our

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) values and requires teacher professional learning and collaboration.

The PGES is grounded in the *Framework for Teaching*, which is based on the work of Charlotte Danielson. The framework includes the following indicators of effective teaching in five domains of practice: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, professional responsibilities, and student growth.

The professional responsibilities indicator includes (among others) two components that require and encourage the collaboration that teachers so need: 4D. Participating in a Professional Community

- Relationships with Colleagues
- Involvement in a Culture of Professional Inquiry
- Service to the School
- Participation in School and District Projects
- 4E. Growing and Developing Professionally
- Enhancement of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skill

- Receptivity to Feedback from Colleagues
- Service to the Profession

In the PGES, evidence from multiple measures will provide a performance-level rating and inform a course of action designed to support the continuous improvement of practice. One of these measures is peer observation. It is clear that reform in Kentucky embraces the importance of collaboration.

During the 2012-2013 school year, more than 50 school districts in Kentucky have participated in a field test of the new system. The field test has allowed educator experience and feedback to inform improvements prior to the statewide pilot during the 2013-2014 school year. During the statewide pilot in 2013-2014, at least 10 percent of the schools in each district will implement the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System. In 2014-2015 the system will be fully implemented statewide with full accountability in spring 2015. Read more about the PGES [here](#).

CCSS and CTE: Using Read Alouds to Model Thinking

Teresa Rogers is a KDE literacy consultant. Rogers has taught nursing, health sciences, elementary reading and writing, and high school English. She can be reached at teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov.

In the February 2013 issue, Rogers began a series on literacy in career and technical education. She continues here with part four of that series.

"Read aloud to my students? You must be crazy ... this is high school!" This may be your first reaction, but you, as the expert in your field, can effectively use this strategy to deepen student understanding and support developing literacy skills. Most people think that read alouds belong in the elementary classroom; however, research reveals that this time-honored practice can significantly improve student outcomes in high school content areas as well. Reading aloud can build the thinking skills that students need to truly own the content.

But where do you start? We'll begin with the teacher-regulated (or "I Do") phase of the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional model that we discussed last month. Regularly reading aloud to your students can be an effective strategy that allows you to explicitly model your thinking and guide students toward independence in reading. These five steps can help you get started:

Choose an appropriate text. With the internet, you can find numerous articles to support your content from online trade journals and newspaper databases. The length can vary – ranging from a short paragraph that you'll use in one lesson to pieces that you work through over several lessons. Additionally, technology has made it easy to edit the article to meet the needs of your students. You can easily create your own file of articles for future reference. Pay attention to the readability of the articles. Although you may have students who read below grade level, the Common Core Technical Reading standards state that students must be able to read complex informational texts with independence. Reading aloud is an excellent instructional support for those students.

Establish a classroom routine in which reading is valued. Posting attendance, answering e-mails, addressing student concerns – these eat into instructional time. Because of this, most teachers use bell work to get students on task as they enter the classroom. This is an excellent time to establish a reading routine. Provide students with one or two guiding questions as they read. After you've completed those non-instructional tasks, read a short section of the

text aloud to students.

Establish a purpose for every read aloud. Good readers always establish a purpose for reading. What do you want students to glean from the text? Use this time for that purpose. The Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects (p.62 of the [CCSS](#)) provide guidance on what students should be able to do. Examples of these include:

- Find evidence in the text to support facts or ideas.
- Determine the central ideas.
- Provide an accurate summary.
- Determine meaning of symbols and/or key terms.

Make your thinking visible to students. Read alouds provide the ideal opportunity to model the metacognitive, or thinking, process. As you read aloud, allow students to hear the internal dialogue that you have. Explain that questions help readers to deepen their understanding of the text. We usually think of comprehension questions: who, what, where, why, when and how. Explain to students that even good readers have questions. As you read a short passage, pause at appropriate points to allow students to hear your thinking. Ask questions that a reader may have about the text, such as:

"I wonder why ... ?"
 "What does ... mean?"
 "Why does the author say... ?"
 "I'm confused about"
 "What do I do next?"

Be explicit in teaching skills for monitoring comprehension and "fix-up" strategies. Because of the text complexity in technical subjects, it is crucial that you provide students with strategies to make meaning of what they read. What do you do when the text doesn't make sense? Do you re-read, read slower or look for clues within the text? Just as you teach a skill in the lab, you show them **how you think** when you're reading and **what you do** when you don't understand something you've read.

To quote John Locke, "Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours." Reading aloud is a wonderful tool to make the connections between reading, thinking and understanding.

Over the next few months, we'll explore these instructional strategies so you'll be better equipped to help students develop the skills needed to be successful in your technical area.

For additional information, check out this [article](#): "Teacher Read-Aloud That Models Reading for Deep Understanding."

Engaging Families: Parent Roadmaps

The Council of the Great City Schools has developed content- and grade-specific parent roadmaps that provide detailed information for parents about the expectations of the Common Core in English/language arts and literacy. These roadmaps include examples of grade-level focus in the content area using parent-friendly lan-

guage, sample progressions of learning across three grade levels in the Common Core, and tips to parents on communicating with teachers about their child's work and how to support student learning at home. Grades K-8 parent roadmaps for English/language arts and literacy have been posted and Spanish-language

versions are available in grades K-5. More translations will follow throughout the school year, and high school-level guides will be posted later this fall. You can access all available roadmaps [here](#).

Another great resource is this [three-minute video](#) that explains how the Common Core

State Standards will help students achieve at high levels and help them learn what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond. The video is available in English and Spanish.



The Scijourn Approach: Science Journalism in the Classroom

Kelly Clark is a KDE secondary literacy consultant. Clark is a National Board Certified Teacher and has been a literacy coach and a middle and high school language arts teacher. Clark can be reached at kelly.clark@education.ky.gov.

With the pressure of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), literacy standards, increased rigor, meeting the Writing Program Review expectations and evolving teacher standards, how does a science educator find room for writing in their classroom? Based on my experience, science teachers are, on the whole, not comfortable with either the teaching of writing, the creation of prompts, re-searching, revising, grading writing or publishing.

There are a fair amount of teachers of many content areas,

including English/language arts, who stall out on one or more pieces of the writing process. This feeling of floundering increases when pressure increases for better assessment results, and with increased amounts of content inserted into inflexible curriculum maps, diverse learners and the need to wrap it all up in an engaging and 21st century skill-driven manner.

Writing in the content area makes sense when the product is a format that students can see at work in the real world. The Scijourn approach, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), matches science journalism with science content to create a rich learning experience and a polished piece of writing. "Science literate" students must be able to successfully formulate a question of current interest, investigate the question using

multiple credible sources, digest and comprehend the information, and summarize and successfully communicate that information in writing. Using the Scijourn approach accomplishes those goals using real and timely science content.

The text, [Front Page Science: Engaging Teens in Science Literacy](#), explains the engaging and authentic tasks that make up the process of being science literate. By using these deliberate and skill-building tasks, students become part of the world of science discussion and discovery. The activities and lessons described in the text are supported by the online science journal, [Scijourner.org](#) and the print version, *Scijourner*, which are composed of student articles. The website [Teach4scijourn.org](#) is a support and resource for teachers trying to implement

Scijourn in their classrooms.

Even the most reluctant science teachers see a tremendous gain in student motivation, engagement and depth of learning when they try the Scijourn approach. Scijourn, when implemented in the science classroom, meets almost every literacy standard and writing expectation, develops 21st century learners, embeds critical thinking and instills collaborative learning and college-and-career readiness standards into your classroom. Scijourn works with all science content, in any type of schedule with every level of student and can use different pacing.

There are many ways to meet the challenges of your science content – Scijourn is a particularly effective method that accomplishes that while teaching kids about science.

Upcoming Literacy Events Around Kentucky

Kentucky Writing Project

Click [here](#) to see the 2013 series of professional development opportunities. They include:

- Literacy and the Common Core Standards (KCAS)
- Technology and Literacy
- New Voices: Playwriting with Adolescents
- Working with English Learners & Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Students
- Grammar for Teachers

Sessions are available at a variety of locations, with options for teachers of all contents and grade levels. For more information, please contact [Jean Wolph](#), Louisville Writing Project director and Kentucky Writing Projects Network director.

Arts Academies

KDE and The Kentucky Center

for the Performing Arts are offering two Next Generation Academies this June:

- June 17-21; Integrating the Arts and World Languages: Spanish and Japanese; Location: Jesse Stewart Elementary School in Madisonville
- June 24-28; Integrating the Arts and World Languages: Spanish and French; Location: Danville High School in Danville

Teachers will receive a stipend or can opt for professional development credit as approved by their district for these 30-hour academies. Full announcement and application can be found [here](#). For further information, please contact Jeffrey Jamner at jjamner@kentuckycenter.org.

Bluegrass Writing Project

Join the Bluegrass Writing Project in Lexington on June 10-14

and June 17-21, 2013, for its summer institute designed to develop and improve writing instruction by developing K-16 teachers of all content areas both as writers themselves and as teachers of writing. For more information, click [here](#).

Let's TALK

Let's TALK: Conversations about Effective Teaching, a conference for, by and about Kentucky teachers is designed to:

- gain practical strategies for classroom implementation of the Kentucky Common Core Academic Standards
- improve teaching through the new Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES)
- elevate the profession
- bring the teacher voice to education initiative

Registration fee \$50 via PayPal.

Click [here](#) to register before May 24. If you have questions, please contact Michelle Duke at talk@kea.org or (502) 696-8948.

Register today and join your colleagues in Louisville June 19-21.

KET Multimedia PD Days

KET's popular and 10th annual [KET Multimedia Professional Development Days](#) will be held July 9-10, 2013. There will be two days of 16, 1.5-hour in-depth presentations by Kentucky educators and KET staff on multimedia production and related topics. It is open to all Kentucky public, private and homeschool teachers. Register for and attend either July 9, July 10 or both days of the event (both days' session titles are the same) on the event registration [page](#). More information about the event and workshops is at the [project Web page](#).

2013 Joint ISLN/KLA Summer Meeting

Does every single student in every single school in your district have what they need to be successful? Successful in school, in work and in life?

Over two days, June 26-27, we will look at building more creative, customized ways to address the four pillars (leadership, KCAS, assessment literacy, highly effective teaching and learning) that have provided the structure for our leadership networks over the past three years. It's about creating a new kind of learning experience and eliminating excuses. If kids are going to invent our future, we need to reinvent the way our students are learning.

Interested? Then plan to join educators from across the state to share expertise and learn together at the 2013 Joint ISLN/KLA Summer Meeting.

Registration is open to any

educator in the state on a first come/first served basis. Ideally, all leadership network participants – teacher, school and district leaders – would attend. Sessions will feature Kentucky educators. There is no registration fee, but all travel-related expenses are the participants' responsibility.

The opening session will begin at 10 a.m. June 26 with the day ending at 5 p.m. Sessions June 27 will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

[Register](#) by June 13. Keep up with conference conversations on Twitter (Hashtag: #kypromisecr).

Additional Information:

Conference Details

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 26. Light continental breakfast will be available on Thursday, June 27, at 7:30 a.m. Lunch will be on

your own each day. Should you encounter an emergency that requires sending a substitute in your place, please notify Thelma Whiteside via [e-mail](#) or by calling (502) 564-2106.

Meeting Location

Lexington Center/ Bluegrass Ballroom

340 W. Vine Street, Lexington, KY 40507

Click [here](#) for driving directions.

Parking

Parking is across from the Lexington Center/Hyatt. The cost for parking for a full day is \$7.

Hotels

- Comfort Inn and Suites (859) 296-4446
3060 Fieldstone Way (Beaumont Center) Lexington, KY
Rate: \$94/both single and double
Cut-off date: May 25

Drive time to meeting site: approximately 10 minutes

- Hilton Lexington/ Downtown (859) 231-9000
369 West Vine Street Lexington, KY
Rate: \$149/both single and double
Cut-off date: May 26
Pedway to convention center
- Spring Hill Suites by Marriott (859) 225-1500 863 South Broadway Lexington, KY
Rate: King Suite – \$124
Queen Suite – \$114
Cut-off date: May 25
Drive time to meeting site: approximately 6 minutes

A detailed agenda will be available 2 weeks prior to the conference.

Technology Critique: [Kidblog.org](#)

This month's critique is by Melissa Hopkins, 5th-grade teacher at Cedar Grove Elementary in Bullitt County. She can be reached at melissa.hopkins@bullitt.kyschools.us.

What is it?

This is a blog site created for teachers. Teachers can create a post for students to respond on or students can create their own

posts. All class members can make comments. My students have posted their thinking to their reading and responded to others' comments and thoughts.

Why? (purpose)

Students need to get used to writing in diverse formats and for authentic audiences. Blogging is a way to practice important reading, writing, speaking and

listening skills.

Pros

- No student e-mail is needed.
- The teacher can monitor the comments posted.
- The site can be available to just the class members or to all visitors.
- It is easy to use with very



few elaborate features.

Cons

- You have to take time to set up your class with usernames and passwords.

New Resource from the Center on Instruction

A new resource has been added to the Center on Instruction website: [Informational Text Structure \(Module 2: Grades 6-12\): Using Knowledge of Text Structure to Improve Comprehension in Grades 6-12](#). Module 2 is one of two presentations on informational text structure. (Module 1 addresses students

in Grades K-5 and is posted separately.) Both modules are interactive and designed to provide key principles and practices that support classroom literacy instruction. Each module provides resources useful to schools working to improve literacy instruction. In these modules, participants will:

- understand the research that supports instruction in informational text structures
- learn about key instructional strategies that help students recognize various text structures and use that knowledge to improve comprehension
- explore tools and resources to help in planning and delivering effective text structure instruction

Please download all accompanying handouts before you begin a module.



Great Resources from PD360



PD 360 contains the largest online library of training videos for educators in the world. When you access PD 360, you will have essential tools that provide more value than any other on-demand professional development resource. The 2,000-plus videos and online professional learning community of nearly 1 million verified educators make PD 360 the world's largest on-demand professional development re-

source for educators. All Kentucky educators have access to PD 360 and other resources from the School Improvement Network from the CIITS homepage.

Video support of the Kentucky Framework for Teaching based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching is available through CIITS and PD 360. Teachers and leaders can access multiple videos aligned to

each component of the framework. Support for topics such as differentiated instruction, higher-order questioning, classroom climate, exceptional learners and instructional leadership is available.

To view these resources, access PD 360 from CIITS and click on "Focus." On the applications bar, click "State/Province" on the gray bar below the applications, and topics

are listed under the heading "Kentucky."

Additionally, several recorded webinars on how to best use all the applications in PD 360 are available for Kentucky leaders. These recordings can be found on the "PD/Videos" application link, just below the videos library.

For a list of PD 360 resources by topic, click [here](#).

School-Home Partnership: Sharing the CCSS

The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) developed [two 30-second public service announcements](#) (PSAs) to quickly tell the story of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to the public. The PSAs are available in both English and

Spanish. The PSAs were recently released and were viewed by more than 10 million people in just two weeks.

In addition, CGCS also developed [two three-minute videos](#) (one in English and one in Span-

ish) that explain the Common Core in a slightly longer form. The three-minute videos explain how the Common Core will help students achieve at high levels and help them learn what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond.

These videos work particularly well for presentations to community and parent groups.



OKI Children's Literature Conference

"The New Face of Non-Fiction: So Much More to Explore!" will be the subject of the 2013 Ohio Kentucky Indiana Children's Literature Conference, to be held at Thomas More College, Crestview Hills, Ky., on Saturday, Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Award-winning keynote speakers at the confer-

ence will be Candace Fleming and Steve Jenkins.

The conference also will offer a wide range of workshops of interest to teachers, librarians, writers and parents on subjects ranging from reviews of newly-published nonfiction books, nonfiction databases, picture

book biographies, how biographies are researched and written, and writing science for young people.

Registration for the conference, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch, is \$75 until Oct. 18; \$85 thereafter. Student registration (full-

time students with valid ID) is \$35. See attached [flier](#). Additional information is available at <http://oki.nku.edu>. If you wish to be added to the conference mailing list, please contact Jennifer Smith at smithjen@nku.edu

New Publication Includes Teacher Reflections on LDC and MDC

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) works with 16 member states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to help leaders in education and government advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region.

The Literacy Design Collabora-

tive (LDC) and Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC), help students reach the deep learning necessary to master the Common Core and other rigorous statewide standards for college- and career-readiness. They give teachers frameworks to build lessons in all disciplines that engage students to read and interact with challenging texts. Students express their understanding in writing, struggle productively and learn more in essence shifting teaching so students take ownership of learning

and perform at higher levels.

Groups of teachers and education experts developed the LDC and MDC frameworks, with initial funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The educator groups are now expanding into wider networks of teachers, schools and districts working together to develop and share assignments and modules.

SREB, with funding from the Gates Foundation, is using innovative professional develop-

ment to help states, districts and schools implement the LDC and MDC tools more widely.

[This document](#) presents teachers' reflections on their early experiences using LDC and MDC tools in their classrooms. In these vignettes they share doubts, challenges, revelations about their teaching styles – and amazement at how much their students learn when they are challenged with complex assignments to reach the depth of the Common Core State Standards.



Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail mikkaka.hardaway@education.ky.gov to submit. Your submissions may be included in the *Literacy Link* to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past *Literacy Links* on KDE's website:
[Click Here](#)



If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Cindy Parker – Literacy Coordinator – cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- MK Hardaway – Literacy Consultant – mikkaka.hardaway@education.ky.gov
- Kelly Clark – Literacy Consultant – kelly.clark@education.ky.gov
- Jackie Rogers – Literacy Consultant – jackie.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Teresa Rogers – Literacy Consultant – teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Pamela Wininger – Literacy Consultant – pamela.wininger@education.ky.gov

Feedback from the Field

Your feedback helps us to tailor the Link to best meet the needs of teachers. Tell us how you're using it. Tell us how you'd like to use it. Tell us what you want to see more or less of. We want to hear from you!
E-mail MK Hardaway at mikkaka.hardaway@education.ky.gov

"I just wanted to let you know how helpful this *Literacy Link* is going to be for me! I can't wait to share it with my teachers. I loved the content area spotlight for science (March issue). Looking forward to the next issue already!"

– Heather S.

"I love the Literacy Newsletter and look forward to it each month."

– Jennifer C.



KDE Updates

Twitter Town Hall

The Kentucky Department of Education invites teachers, administrators, district staff, parents, students and other education stakeholders to submit questions for Commissioner Terry Holliday's Twitter Town Hall **Wednesday, May 15, 4-5 p.m. ET**. Questions can be tweeted both before May 15 and during the live event from 4-5 p.m. ET. **Use the hash tag #AskDocH to send questions.** If you don't have a Twitter account and would like to sign up for one, visit www.twitter.com. It's a

free service and also offers apps for smartphones if you'd rather follow along off of a traditional desktop computer or laptop.

Commissioner Holliday looks forward to answering your questions May 15.

TPGES Lync Online sessions

Kentucky educators had the opportunity to learn more about the Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (TPGES) via live, interactive, online Lync sessions. They were designed to be

useful to both educators who are just beginning to understand the TPGES as well as those already involved who will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding before next year's statewide pilot.

These sessions were recorded to accommodate those who could not join live. Recorded sessions are accessible through the Educator Development Suite in [CITTS](#), the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System.

Additional Reading and Other Resources

- KCTE is seeking applicants for the Stephanie Kirk Award. The award is \$500 for classroom supplies, books, etc. Read more about this opportunity [here](#). Membership must be current to apply. Deadline is Oct. 29, 2013.
- North Carolina has compiled a [list of text exemplars](#) you might find useful.
- Have you been inundated with materials that tout the claim "common core aligned"? This guide is a great reminder that we must be critical consumers: [Why Aligned Items Don't Work](#).
- The San Diego County Office of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the California Department of Education completed a translation of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy into Spanish. [Common Core en Español](#) is

now available to each state and territory that has adopted the Common Core State Standards. An effort to translate the mathematics standards into Spanish is under way.

- In this fast-paced, 21st century world it is important that teachers stay connected. Edutopia offers [10 tips](#) for becoming a connected educator.

